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ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of the Quitman County Demonstration Project was: (1) to identify, demonstrate, and test effective and innovative procedures for implementing a community based, voluntary program in adult basic education (ABE); (2) to develop and validate new approaches in training the instructional leadership for adult basic education through the use of "preprofessional teachers;" and (3) to develop new and more relevant learning materials. Project activities involved three phases: (1) evaluation, (2) planning activity, and (3) experimental and demonstration classes. Significant findings of the study as they relate to adult basic education included: (1) the development and use of student-teacher generated materials has an important role; (2) individualized instruction is inferior to a combination of group and individual instructional methods; (3) effective instructional leadership recruited from the poor is most effective; and (4) constructive environmental changes can grow out of adult basic education. Quitman County statistics and background information, the project's history, and a staff list are provided in the appendix. (MW)

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QUITMAN COUNTY CENTER FOR LEARNING AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(Final Project Report)

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MARY HOLMES COLLEGE; WEST POINT, MISSISSIPPI AND QUITMAN COUNTY CENTERS FOR LEARNING MARKS, MISSISSIPPI

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Bobby M. James
Project Director

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

The overall purpose of the Quitman County Demonstration Project was threefold: namely,

(1) To identify, demonstrate and test effective and innovative procedures for implementing a community based, voluntary program in adult basic education.

(2) To develop and validate new approaches in training the instructional leadership for ABE through the use of "pre-professional teachers," selected without regard to educational experience but on the basis of personal qualities, empathy for and similarity to the ABE students, and commitment to the goals of the program.

(3) To develop new and more relevant learning materials which reflect the life styles, world as perceived, wants and interests, problems and goals and educational needs of the disadvantaged adult in the rural South.

In achieving the foregoing three primary objectives a series of corollary objectives were established in terms of behavioral change among the participants and teachers, and constructive change within the community itself.

Procedures

Project activities were carried out in three inter-related phases. Experimental and demonstration classes were sustained through June 30, 1970.

There were approximately 40 participants enrolled in each center for an overall average enrollment of 200 individuals.

Each center was under the immediate direction of a Supervisory Teacher and four ABE teachers. Classes met for three hours a day, five days a week.

Because of previous findings indicating profound and significant differences in educational achievement among participants and between centers, an experimental design was established to determine the extent that differences in materials account for the differentials in learning performance.

To this end the five centers were matched as closely as possible to secure homogeneity in terms of student and teacher characteristics.

Various methods and technologies of adult education were used to develop interest, raise levels of motivation, teach crucial learning skills and achieve the educational objectives of the program.

Results

The most significant finding of the demonstration project was that relating to the effect of materials on educational achievement in ABE.

In essence it was demonstrated that student achievement was higher under conditions which made maximum use of student-teacher prepared materials (Woodland Center) than under conditions which made maximum use of commercially produced programmed materials (Lambert Center).

Still more significant was the finding that the combination of student made and commercial (programmed and non-programmed) materials resulted in the highest levels of achievement by all measures.

Through the procedures established for implementing the program and achieving the project objectives, the concept of recruiting and training "para-professionals" without regard to levels of educational attainment was found to be a viable one.

Examination of the activities, development, motivation, professionalism and job competencies of the instructional staff showed that the teachers in the Quitman County Learning Centers were as competent if not more so (in terms of professional skill, instructional leadership and levels student performance achieved) than is usually the case in adult basic education or in the programs of youth education.

Although positive developments were noted in relation to the community development outcomes of the project, meaningful change was small in relation to the magnitude of the problems and needs.

Conclusions

1. The development and use of student-teacher generated materials has an important role in adult basic education.

   This is true regardless of the availability and quality of commercially produced materials.

2. Learning in isolation through a highly individualized system of programmed instruction is generally less satisfactory in achieving the goals of ABE than learning which is based on a variety of individual and group methods and techniques.

3. Effective instructional leadership for ABE can best be recruited from within the ranks of the poor if criteria are employed to select for higher than student level of reading ability, dedication to the goals and philosophy of ABE, empathy, and intense motivation to succeed.

4. Constructive change in community organization, environment and living can be a significant outcome of adult basic education.

QUITMAN COUNTY CENTERS FOR LEARNING

Final report of a

Special Experimental Demonstration Project in
Adult Basic Education

Purpose

The overall purpose of the Quitman County Demonstration Project is threefold; namely,

(1) To identify, demonstrate and test effective and innovative procedures for implementing a community based, voluntary program in adult basic education.

The significant concepts implicit in this objective are that the support, leadership and policies which govern the program develop from "grass roots" efforts of lay citizens and concerned local leaders; that the curriculum design is keyed to the practical needs, interests and problems of the participants; and that the educational activities in ABE produce constructive changes within the community organization and environment as well as measurable growth in the competencies of the target audience.

(2) To develop and validate new approaches in providing and training the instructional leadership for ABE through the use of "pre-professional teachers," selected without regard to educational experience but on the basis of personal qualities, empathy for and similarity to the ABE students, and commitment to the goals of the program.

(3) To develop new and more relevant learning materials which reflect the life styles, world as perceived, wants and interests, problems and goals and educational needs of the student population.

The rationale for this objective develops from the gross inadequacy of available commercial material

for poverty stricken adults in the rural South, and from recent evidence in psychological research that maximum learning and growth occurs when students themselves are highly involved in determining their own educational objectives and when students and teachers jointly participate in designing the educational program.

In achieving the foregoing three primary objectives a series of corollary objectives were established in terms of behavioral change among the participants and teachers, and constructive change within the community itself.

Selected examples of such objectives include:

(1) For students to more effectively manage existing financial and material resources

(2) For students to follow recommended and improved family health practices

(3) For students to know and apply recommended principles and procedures in child care

(4) For students to be familiar with and utilize the services of community agencies in the areas of health, food and nutrition, child care, wise use of credit, welfare, job training, etc.

(5) For students to understand the meaning and importance of balanced diets and to improve their family nutrition accordingly

(6) For students to develop pride in themselves, experience positive rewards for their accomplishments, enhance their self-concepts, and lower their sense of alienation

(7) For students to develop pre-vocational skills and attitudes directed toward gainful employment

(8) For students to acquire skill in setting short and longer term goals, in identifying individual, family and community problems and in formulating higher order solutions for such problems.

Further documentation of the specific objectives of the participants which evolved from the project are reported in the project newsletter "Soul of the Centers," and other project publications and reports.

Examples of community based objectives include:

(1) Increased participation among the poor in social, cultural, civic and community development activities

(2) Development of leadership and problem solving skills among members of the Center advisory committees, the project board, the instructional staff, and the students themselves

(3) More effective coordination of efforts among community agencies in the areas of improved housing, medical services, child care, economic development, sanitation, nutrition and improved educational opportunities for children and youth

(4) Positive and measurable changes in the ecology of the community in relation to the factors identified in #3 above

(5) Improved attitudes among individuals and groups conducive to the desire for and initiation of constructive action to eliminate the root causes of poverty, social isolation and despair and directed toward improved quality of life for all members of the community

It should be noted that the underlying philosophy upon which the project is based is that of complete acceptance of the participants in terms of where they are now, full commitment to the idea that there is a large potential for growth and development among all adults, and that the fundamental goal of the project is to help adults and their families acquire learning skills, interests and motivations which will accelerate their continual growth and development on a continuing and life-long basis.

Although the overriding objective of the Project has been to increase the literacy skills of the participants--defined in terms of reading, writing, speaking, computational and reasoning abilities, these essential problem solving and learning tools have been viewed as the natural outcomes which result when adults are deeply involved in learning experiences based upon their own definitions of goals, problems and needs.

Consequently, in the materials developed and practices followed, students do not learn to add fractions or multiply numbers for the sake of knowing arithmetic; they learn such mathematical procedures as a result of solving immediate and practical problems relating to calculating interest on indebtedness, borrowing on an insurance policy, or determining the relative worth of packaged foods, etc.

Methodology

Following is a brief description of the methods and procedures developed and employed in implementing the project.

Project activities were carried out in three interrelated phases. Phase I, July 1 through August 10, was primarily an evaluation phase in which progress, problems and activities of the preceding year were analyzed. Classes terminated on August 10 when the project was

thoroughly reviewed to identify successes and failures and to plan for experimental procedures for the coming year. This planning activity, Phase II, was conducted from August 11 through September 8 when new classes were initiated. Experimental and demonstration classes, Phase III, were sustained through June 30, 1970--the close of the project year.

Five ABE Community Learning Centers were maintained throughout the year. These centers were designated as the Falcoln, Lambert, Jones' Chapel, Silent Grove and Woodland Centers. There were approximately 40 participants enrolled in each center for an overall average enrollment of 200 individuals.

Each Center was under the immediate direction of a supervisory teacher and four ABE teachers. Classes met for three hours a day, five days a week. Including planning, preparation, recruitment, counselling and materials development time teachers worked an average of six hours a day and center supervisors worked eight-hour days.

Experimental Design

Because of previous findings indicating profound and significant differences in educational achievement among participants and between Centers, an experimental design was established to determine the extent that differences in materials could account for the differentials in learning performance.

To this end the five centers were matched as closely as possible to secure homogeneity in terms of student and teacher characteristics.

Lambert was established as a Center using commercially produced programmed materials only

Woodland was established to use only student and teacher-made materials

and the other three centers, Falcoln, Jones' Chapel, and Silent Grove, were established to use a combination of student and teacher prepared materials, commercially produced programmed materials and commercially produced non-programmed materials.

Staff training, board training and Center Supervisory Committee activities were relatively the same for all five centers. Care was also taken so that extra-curricular activities, i.e., social affairs, family nights, picnics, plays, talent shows, movies, etc. were distributed evenly between the various centers.

Staff development and teacher training was provided by workshops conducted by resource personnel from Jackson State University and MACE (Mississippi Action for Community Education) by participation of selected members of the central staff in Regional and National ABE Institutes, and through weekly, one-day teacher workshops conducted by the teachers, center supervisors and members of the administrative and program staff.

A variety of recruitment procedures were employed including community visits, announcements at meetings and at church services, the use of the mass media, personal contacts by advisory committee members and by word of mouth communication by former participants.

Various methods and technologies of adult education were used to develop interest, raise levels of motivation, teach crucial learning skills and achieve the educational objectives of the program. Such methods included community development activities, group discussions, role playing, skits and plays, panels, the use of "outside" resource persons, trips, audio and video tape recordings, movies, drill, recitation, debates, forums, illustrated talks, and a variety of A.V. materials.

All students were encouraged to contribute to "Soul of the Centers," the project newsletter and a student editor was selected within each of the centers.

Summary of findings

Effects of Experimental Materials

The most significant finding of the demonstration project was that relating to the effects of materials on educational achievement in ABE.

In essence it was demonstrated that student achievement was higher under conditions which made maximum use

of student-teacher prepared materials (Woodland Center) than under conditions which made maximum use of commercially produced programmed materials (Lambert Center).

Still more significant was the finding that the combination of student made and commercial (programmed and non-programmed) materials resulted in the highest levels of achievement by all measures.

Actual differences in achievement in favor of experimental groups using student made and combinations of student made and commercially produced materials were measured by differences between pre- and post-test scores on standardized (ABLE) achievement tests as well as by differences in achievement of behavioral objectives in the cognitive, psychomotor, and effective domains of learning.

Teacher observations and self-rating measures by participants indicated that the involvement of students in the preparation of materials followed by the use of these materials enhanced motivation, helped to clarify instructional objectives, and resulted in positive changes in student attitude toward self, participation in ABE, and the application of knowledge to solve the crucial and critical problems of living and survival among the rural poor in Quitman County.

Development of Student-Centered Materials

The rationale for concentrating heavily upon student-centered and student-generated materials was as follows:

> Illiteracy has a specific meaning. Children just beginning to read are not called illiterate; adults are. Children develop skills in interpreting a spoken language at the same time they learn reading and writing skills. Illiterate adults have already established a level of command of the spoken language; they are primarily deficient in reading and writing skills. The first objective of a literacy program, then, should be to establish the proper connection between printed symbols and the spoken language already existing in the learner's repertoire.
>
> The theoretical base from which new materials may be developed can be derived from an analysis of language structure. Grammar may be viewed as a system of devices which reinforce each other in generating and controlling verbal utterances. This system is well ingrained in the speech patterns of adults, though variation from a "correct" norm occurs among particular regional and cultural groups. By reinterpreting "correct pronunciation" to be that which is predominant among the student population, and individual word

> meaning to be a function of the prevailing usage, the illiterate's own speech patterns may be used as a structure in which to introduce the written word.
>
> To develop literary materials student conversations are recorded to establish a relatively small list of the most frequently recurring words which are then taught as recognition vocabulary. Following this step, students use their new reading vocabulary to make up original sentences, using large flash cards which can be physically rearranged by the students themselves. Success in creating whole sentences "heightening the functionality of familiar spoken words" provides the context for introduction of additional vocabulary.

The procedures required for implementing this approach are remarkable for their simplicity and directness. Introducing these procedures in the Quitman County Centers, provided

> the opportunity for gathering really good literature about the lives and interests of the population with which we are concerned. It is evident that some of the tape recordings of the students' dialogues and narratives contain clear, self-contained literary pieces . . . which can serve as a source of inspiration to other new readers.

To employ these principles in the design of literacy materials is to recognize that adults bring highly

sophisticated skills into the classroom. Contrary to results implied by data collected by many projects, adults should be able to achieve a higher degree of independence in reading after limited periods of instruction and in dramatic contrast to the rate at which young children learn to read.

Materials which base their initial content and teaching vocabulary upon standardized word lists which have been (1) designed for children who are (2) part of the larger middle class culture cannot meet this need. Likewise, materials which allow a particular pedagogical approach to dictate content (as in "phonics-decoding" systems which stress a highly compressed vocabulary, i.e. "Ned bet Ed ten") fail to recognize the essential differences between adults and children. Instead, Quitman County teachers are encouraged to use "story charts" or "experience charts" to elicit student discussion and to build a store of raw materials for new books and stories.

The materials which have been developed in Quitman County centers by students and teachers cannot possibly be matched by standardized, commercial programs. The stories written by Quitman County students and teachers demonstrate that adults with limited reading skill can compose literature that is of genuine interest and quality. One of the first stories produced about a storm, contains

passages of real beauty. Other selections, "How My Grandfather Lost His Mind" and "The Saddest Day" represent social history, documented by people who witnessed the historical events, or the effects of those events.

In daily life, we seldom meet problems of arithmetic without having to cope with another form of "literacy," --the literacy of forms. Without comprehension of the forms found in banks, telephone companies, credit offices, welfare and tax offices, and so on, an individual cannot act with independent intelligence. Materials produced in the project are exact replicas of the varied forms required for competent living in Quitman County. Too often people (and this is a criticism of schools for children too) learn to fill out some generalized form that is supposed to represent the way many such forms actually look. When the student attempts to fill out the "similar" form in his local bank, he finds confusing discrepancies. By reviewing the actual form that he will find in the bank, the student can, in this case, walk into the Citizens Bank and Trust Company, locate the appropriate form, and complete it without having to endure the humiliation of asking repeated questions. That this is an effective way of teaching or reviewing the arithmetic involved needs little elaboration.

All of these many forms of student-generated materials are combined in the project newsletter: stories,

news articles, workbooks, reading kits, etc. Like newsletters everywhere, "Soul of the Centers" serves one interest group, the people of Quitman County. And like newsletters everywhere, this paper provides vital information, as well as entertainment, for its readers. What better motivation could there be for new readers than the availability of stories about their families, friends, and themselves?

A variety of new approaches were made to facilitate the gathering and effective use of materials. Some of the more successful techniques were:

(a) Group stories, songs, poems, etc.: Nearly all existing materials had been developed through the individual writing efforts of students and teachers. Though this work was essential to the program, and should be continued, such writing is essentially a lonely, isolating task. Sustained individual writing activities were found to be antithetical to the kind of open, spontaneous, participatory classroom desired. Combining individual with group writing activities helped solve this problem and vastly increased the quantity of materials available in each classroom. The procedure was simple: teachers and students selected a common experience, theme or topic, and each student contributed a few sentences until the story was complete. Sentences were first written on the blackboard, and later typed, illustrated, and distributed to all centers.

(b) Parodies: Judged by Mississippi standards, much of the subject matter found in existing commercial materials is at best, the stuff of which myths are made, at worst, an outrage. For example, the Brown Family series remains one of the more honest attempts to tailor subject matter to the interests of the small town, rural poor. Yet a summary of the plot of one of the major stories, "Mr. Brown gets a Job" reveals much that is foreign to students in Mississippi:

> The story begins as Mr. Brown is displaced by automation. He seeks work elsewhere, receives many outright rejections and one temporary assignment. Again displaced, Mr. Brown visits the state employment agency where he is warmly received. He is encouraged to enroll in a vocational training program, and as a result of his training receives a good, steady job.

Most Black Mississipians, needless to say, have had different experiences with the state employment agencies, as well as with the employment market after they have received adequate training. This is not to say that such matericals should not be used in Quitman County for, indeed, there is much to recommend them--the series is well written and utilizes a useful, controlled vocabulary. But they should not be taken at face value. Such materials were used as vehicles for parody and re-write. Mr. Brown was used in the adult classroom as a point of departure for new materials since, through parody, we can often objectify experiences that are otherwise too painful to express. This is parody in its most realistic and serious sense which produced a description of a real encounter between "Mr. Brown" and the employment agency officials. We believe that such efforts are yielding a truly meaningful and significant literature that will have a wide impact on literacy training throughout the rural South.

(c) Printing and publishing: Students and teachers who developed materials were assured that their materials were carefully reviewed, edited, and distributed to all centers, used by other students, and most important of all, appreciated. The Quitman County project provided rewards and incentives for writers by producing materials in the form of "real books" and "pamphlets" utilizing existing equipment to produce such collections of materials with care, so they were as high in quality as possible.

(d) Tape transcriptions: Working with beginning, completely non-reading, non-writing students remained a problem which seriously affected all basic education classes. In the classroom where participation was stressed, it was noted that these students tended to be left behind in the

process. In the future we hope to alleviate this problem by developing materials based on transcriptions of these students' stories and experiences. The materials will be theirs, just like those produced by more advanced students, and, we hope, will produce a similar pride of authorship.

Student Achievement

As previously documented the project was considered highly successful in terms of overall student achievement. Achievement was highest under conditions in which the experimental and demonstration materials were used.

Widespread community support for and acceptance of the program facilitated recruitment efforts resulting in a younger age group of participants than is typically found in voluntary program of adult basic education.

Enthusiasm for the program was also demonstrated by the fact that twice as many males were enrolled as compared to the previous year. For the first time the enrollment of male students exceeded 25 percent.

Higher levels of achievement were also expressed in the increased numbers of students who moved into and through the high school level components of the program.

As a result of increased emphasis on involvement of students in curricular planning and greater use of modern educational technologies for effective group interactions as well as for individualized instruction positive outcomes were documented in the following areas:

(a) Increase in self-confidence and self-concept among students

(b) Generally high level satisfaction among students in regard to their own progress and the overall program

(c) Increased understanding of the purpose of the program in relation to solution of adult problems, development of learning skills, and community-leadership development

(d) Increase in positive attitudes toward the contributions being made in areas of community development, improvement of schools, and elimination of racism

(e) Increased motivation to solve one's own problems, to help and cooperate with friends and neighbors, to find gainful employment and to develop some level of financial security

(f) Increased political sophistication as to understanding of the community power structure

(g) Increased pride in being black, and appreciation of racial heritage

Observational measures of changed behaviors and living patterns revealed certain changes in improved purchasing practices, in the use of credit, in support for housing development, in the use of child care facilities and medical services, and in greater participation in the community affairs programs of other agencies.

On the basis of depth interviews with students it was clear that the program was successful in developing motivation to succeed, in enhancing positive self-concepts and in increasing social and community awareness. Persistent perceptions among some students included the fear of illness, fear of aging, lack of opportunity to obtain

employment, concern for community disorganization resulting from racism among whites and lack of consensus among blacks, and inability to influence or control one's own destiny.

In general the participants were held together by their common beliefs in Christianity, faith in their own ability to survive and improve their conditions, the desire to personally achieve their goals of good jobs, home ownership, financial security, improved health, etc. In other words the goals, hopes, fears and aspirations of the participants were similar to those found present in middle aged-middle class society. They realistically see that there is a great distance between where they are and where they want to be and are highly motivated to close the gap.

Staff Development and Teacher Competence

Through the procedures established for implementing the program and achieving the project objectives, the concept of recruiting and training "para-professionals" without regard to levels of educational attainment was found to be a viable one.

Examination of the activities, development, motivation, professionalism and job competencies of the instructional staff showed that the teachers in the Quitman County Learning Centers were as competent if

not more so (in terms of professional skill, instructional leadership and levels student performance achieved) than is usually the case in adult basic education or in the programs of youth education.

These findings were supported by an independent appraisal conducted under the auspices of Florida State University in which the characteristics and accomplishments of the teachers in the project were compared with the characteristics and accomplishments of "certified teachers" in ABE as reported in the literature.

It is believed that the multi-format combination of opportunities for staff development, weekly staff development workshops which provided systematic and continuing opportunity for professional development and the screening criteria centered on attitude, empathy and commitment rather than on level of educational attainment were the factors primarily responsible for the successful demonstration of the effectiveness of pre-professional teachers in ABE.

Community and Leadership Development

Although positive developments were noted in relation to the community development outcomes of the project, meaningful change was small in relation to the magnitude of the problems and needs.

Efforts were made to develop local as well as outside support to establish much needed hospital and clinical services in the area. It is anticipated that these beginning efforts will be instrumental in achieving the needed medical services in the future. The minimal accomplishment in this regard is that of greater awareness among the poor as to what their needs are and greater determination to see that they are met.

Efforts in initiating housing development activities, improving community sanitation and in the development of child care facilities have been more successful although real progress in these areas remains to be achieved.

Perhaps the most significant accomplishments have been in the areas of leadership development and community participation in self-help activities.

Through the active use of Center Advisory Committees, local news coverage and leadership training for members of the Project Board, it is clear that the desire for self-determination, and awareness of problems as well as the perception of need for constructive action has increased throughout the country.

The increasing interest of younger adults--especially males and marriage partners in the project (and through it the improvement of the community) offers promise of reducing the rate of out-migration among the younger more highly skilled elements of the population.

Hopefully, increased know-how in relating ABE to action programs resulting in economic development, community development and improved living will soon be able to reverse the flow of the rural poor of Quitman County to the urban ghettos of the North and Midwest. Such developments will depend to a large extent on our ability to improve upon the modest beginnings which have been made thus far in the Quitman County Centers for Learning.

Conclusions and recommendations

As a result of the foregoing report of accomplishments and findings the following conclusions can be made.

1. The development and use of student-teacher generated materials has an important role in adult basic education.

   This is true regardless of the availability and quality of commercially produced materials

   It is evident that a culturally unique audience, if its members are to be accepted as they are and if they are to evolve a curriculum highly relevant to their individual needs, problems and interests, must have the opportunity to develop its own learning materials (supplemented with carefully selected commercial materials) if the wide range of important objectives of ABE are to be achieved.

Teachers and students must learn together the skills and techniques of preparing and using learning materials and opportunities must be provided to edit and reproduce the materials at the highest level of quality feasible.

2. Learning in isolation through a highly individualized system of programmed instruction is generally less satisfactory in achieving the goals of ABE than learning which is based on a variety of individual and group methods and techniques.

   For a truly individualized curriculum which is practical--functional--and relevant to the needs of the learners, it is imperative that a wide array of materials be used, that students have opportunities to share information, teach each other, and test out new ideas, and that they be afforded opportunities to share in the decisions as to what the content shall be.

3. Effective instructional leadership for ABE can best be recruited from within the ranks of the poor if criteria are employed to select for higher than student level of reading ability, dedication to the goals and philosophy of ABE, empathy, and intense motivation to succeed.

This conclusion supports the research literature in ABE and in the use of paraprofessionals which indicates that the paraprofessional (defined here as non-certified teacher) performs as well as and frequently better than the more experienced teacher of children and youth when placed in the adult education situation.

4. Constructive change in community organization, environment and living can be a significant outcome of adult basic education.

If such changes are to be achieved they must be planned for and built into the design of the educational activities of the ABE program. In so doing ABE not only serves to increase the coping skills of its participants but it also provides meaningful learning and developmental experiences for a wide range of community lay leaders and other concerned citizens.

Since the Project experienced initial problems and difficulties in terms of management, community relationships and program operations the actual demonstration activities of the project have had only a two-year test period.

During these two years much has been learned in terms of staff development, leadership training, community relations and most importantly--in terms of how to design and operate an effective demonstration in ABE.

Over the past year significant results from experimentation have begun to emerge. These results as described in this report have many implications for changing and improving ABE throughout the nation.

In addition to the practical research and demonstration findings being developed by the project there have been many immediate and practical outcomes to the Quitman County and Mississippi Delta Community.

Hundreds of heretofore illiterate and semi-literate adults have moved into the literate world. In so doing they have increased their self perceptions, deepened their sense of citizenship responsibilities, affected constructive community change, and acquired the problem solving skills and levels of knowledge needed to bring much needed improvements in their own lives.

The impact of desirable changes in family living upon the children of the participants constitutes one of the practical benefits of the project which is of incalculable value.

On the basis of the foregoing findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made.

1. That the findings regarding the superiority of student-teacher generated materials when used in combination with selected commercial materials be widely disseminated to all programs in ABE
2. That the project develop a manual on the techniques of preparing student-teacher generated materials
3. That more instructional personnel for ABE be recruited from within the audience of the poor using the selection criteria as developed in this project
4. That ABE programs be designed so that constructive community change and community leadership development results from the educational activities of the ABE participants
5. That the Quitman Learning Centers Demonstration Project be continued in order to:
   a. Capitalize on the efficient progress now being made and on the beginning successful demonstrations now underway.
   b. Redefine the experimental aspects of the program to design student generated material specifically directed toward the adult competency levels (in all basic skill areas) which are essential to the target audience.

c. Because the project has now achieved success in terms of its demonstration purposes as well as in terms of significantly raising the literacy and ability levels among the disadvantaged, it would be self-defeating if its even greater potential contributions of the immediate future were withdrawn from the community at this point in time.

Consequently, it is recommended that major efforts be directed toward educational experiences which will enable the participants to stop (even reverse) their out-migration to urban poverty areas. It is believed that this goal can now be achieved through the full implementation of what has been demonstrated over the past year.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUITMAN COUNTY STATISTICS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Quitman County is located in the rural section of the Mississippi Delta. Of its more than 20,000 population 63% are Black with an average of 51 people per square mile, making it 37th in population density among the 82 counties of Mississippi. As in other Delta counties, Quitman County represents a region whose characteristics typically produce a high degree of illiteracy. The Mississippi Delta is economically depressed, lacks technical facilities, and has cultural and dialect, as well as geographic boundaries.

The average income for non-white families is less than $960 per annum, as compared with a national average income of $2,367 which places Quitman County in the 97th percentile among all counties in the nation. Moreover, those families with annual incomes below $1,000 showed a negative gain of 54% in the ten-year period between 1949-1959 as compared to incomes in the rest of the states. Out of a total of 4,020 families surveyed in 1966, 1,794 or 44.6% were poor as defined by the Social Security Administration Poverty definition.

With automated farming and the passage of minimum wage laws, the plight of the Black population has become increasingly severe. The plantation system, though itself based on the systematic exploitation and permanent indebtedness of its tenant families, nevertheless, guaranteed at least seasonal employment and an annual income of a few hundred dollars. Today, most of the plantation shacks which line the highways of Quitman County are empty; the families who lived there, often for more than a generation, have been told there is no more work. For many, leaving the plantation means migration to the cities of the North. Between 1950 and 1960, the total population of Quitman County decreased by 18.8%. Given a normal rate of population growth, this figure means that there has been a net migration of 43.5%. Only two other counties in the Mississippi Delta, Panola and Tallahatchie, have had a higher rural loss.

For other plantation families for whom roots are too deep and community ties too strong, to remain in the county means to move to one of its few small towns. Here, the lack of opportunity for employment and the scarcity of housing produces even greater hardship. On streets on the outskirts of the Black community in Marks, one of the larger towns in Quitman, many families occupy shacks the size of chicken coops, without electricity or running water, and with only a wood stove for heat. According to standards set by the U.S. Census Bureau, more than three-fourths of the housing in the county is sub-standard. In

1960, 73% of the county's labor force was unemployed. A student in one of the Quitman County Centers (Silent Grove Center) described Marks in this way:

> Marks, Mississippi, is one of the poorest towns in the world, and every day we are trying to improve our town. But on some of the streets we need better homes to live in and we need indoor toilets to our homes. We need ditches on our streets, where I live so that water can drain off our yard into the ditch. We need lights on our streets so we can see at night. We need a truck to come and pick up our trash.

No one in the county fares well in education. Median achievement is 6.7 grades, 37.3% of the total population completed less than fifth grade, and only 15.5% finished high school. The Mississippi Department of Education's efforts at adult education have been insufficient. According to recent data more than 6000 people in Quitman County require such training. Only 136 people were enrolled in the state system in 1968, and up that that time only 535 had received training in similar programs.

It is not surprising that the county is becoming increasingly populated by only the very young and the very old. As potential talent and leadership are lost, so too is the likelihood of reaching viable solutions to the county's problems. Indeed, many have charged that incumbent state officials are following a deliberate, and effective strategy of depleting the Black population in the state in response to the increasing exercise of political rights. These conditions led one observer of the Delta to comment: "Mississippi's biggest export is not cotton, it is Negroes moving North." Unless this pattern is reversed, through programs which offer young people an opportunity to develop their skills and to act in positions of responsibility, conditions in Quitman County are likely to worsen.

APPENDIX B

PROJECT HISTORY

Early in 1967 an informal association of the poor in Quitman County initiated a volunteer program in adult education. Teachers were selected from among the young people in the county for their interest and willingness to serve; only higher reading skills distinguished them from their students. Teaching materials were improvised; many were basal readers discarded by the local public schools. Within a few months time, the project opened eight centers serving nearly 700 adults. To our knowledge, no other county in the Deep South except Quitman had successfully initiated and operated a volunteer program in adult basic education without professional help or leadership of any kind.

During the volunteer period any interested adult could join the project as trainee, teacher, or administrator. Enrollment and participation were unlimited.

Like most so-called "underdeveloped" societies, Quitman County is characterized by personalistic, particular modes of operation in which kinship, common sub-group membership, etc., are virtually the sole criteria for judging others. This pattern is functional in a small, undifferentiated society, but a complex society requires a more universal, impersonal approach in which there are objective means of evaluating what a person does rather than who he is. A particularistic style makes it extremely difficult to define basic operational procedures in order to determine, for example, minimum standards of teacher performance, or criteria for recruitment of those adults who are most in need of training. When this problem is compounded by having to make objective choices which will mean the difference between near starvation for some, and the first taste of dignity and an adequate income for others, the effect can only be divisive.

This problem points to the most basic training requirement in a community-based project: people must be permitted to grow into positions which demand organizational objectivity and responsibility, rather than have those responsibilities thrust upon them. The history of the Quitman County literacy project's Board of Directors during the past year illustrates the attempts which have been made to provide this training, and is a graphic demonstration of the need for further training.

The Board of Directors was organized by petition soon after the first grant was approved. The Board has six members, each representing different areas in the

county. As part of its early commitment to provide in-kind contributions to the Quitman County project, Mississippi Action for Community Education instituted a leadership training program for the Board of Directors. The content of this instruction includes such topics as parliamentary procedure, lines of communication, development of reporting systems, and techniques of community problem analysis. The importance of this training cannot be underestimated if the governing body of such a program is constituted of people whose decision-making attitudes have traditionally been subjective and individual, rather than objective and group-oriented.

Central staff has been hired and has compiled a research library and developed teacher-training materials. Guidelines for organizing governing boards, recruiting staff and students, and maintaining fiscal responsibility have been established and learning centers have been opened.

Resident participation

Mary Holmes College, Grantee and the Board of National Missions have always had a commitment to the struggle for equality and justice in Mississippi. The Community Extension Service of which we are a part is an outgrowth of that commitment, by which the college seeks to move out into the total community which it serves and through which its own campus-based curriculum relevant to the total poor community.

At present, the Extension Program consists of the Community Education Extension, Headstart Programs, the Quitman Centers for Learning, Mississippi Fish Equity, Inc., the Mississippi Institute for Childhood Education, the Clay County Development Program, and the Northwest Mississippi Rural Legal Services.

Through regular meetings of the program directors and through the college extension office, unified and joint efforts of evaluating poverty are created. All components furnish their expertise to the other and Legal Services support all in their highly technical field. Truly, "the right knows what the left is doing" and gives support.

The Quitman Project, a component of Mary Holmes College, has been delegated the authority to operate its community-based demonstration centers.

Its Board of Directors was elected democratically by representatives of each of the learning centers. Each center also elected an advisory committee to represent its individual problems. Board meetings are held monthly with Executive and Personnel Committees making numerous recommendations. Board Training Seminars are held regularly to facilitate the educational growth and leadership developments of the board members.

The report of the Instructional Department can be documented from May 12, 1969, when the present Instructional Staff was hired. Earlier in the program, due to poor organization and leadersnip, the department was ineffective in achieving the goals of the Project. Apparently little progress took place in this department until May, 1969.

From observations of the Instructional Department of the Quitman County Center for Learning and Education Development, the present Instructional Staff felt that significant changes were imperative. Since one of our major objectives was to collect more meaningful reading material it was also felt the most pressing problem was that of collecting material and organizing that material which had already been collected. The former Director of Teacher Training and Curriculum Development had collected some material, however, this material had not been compiled and was lying loosely around the office, thus allowing much of the material to be lost. As a result of compiling Samplings of Student and Teacher Generated Materials, we found that literature of considerable worth can be developed by semi-literate students. Many of our students' papers express valuable material on their life, styles and events. They are often written in a smooth easy-to-read style that with little or no editing can serve as high-interest reading material of an adult nature. For students of the Rural South, no such material exists. It is hoped that some of the materials collected, compiled, and edited by this project will fill that gap. We have also found that Samplings of Student and Teacher Generated Material has served as a great motivative device.

On June 13, 1969, the first issue of "Soul of the Centers," an Adult Basic Education Newsletter, was printed. The contents of the Newsletter is mainly a product of students' abilities. They actually wrote the majority of the Newsletter with very little advice or help from the staff. The Newsletter has effectively served as a motivative device for students and informed others about the project in Quitman County.

Although our project was first designed to bring adult students to a level slightly above eighth grade, we found that many adults in the program, for one reason or another, had not had the opportunity to complete the formal requirements for a high school diploma, but had, through reading, self-directed study, the practical experiences of life, or experiences in the project reached a level of educational competence normally required for high school graduation. It was felt that a means should be provided for participants to achieve the General Education Development Diploma. For financial reasons and convenience to the students, the Quitman County Center for Learning negotiated with Coahoma Junior College, Clarksdale, Mississippi, to use the town of Marks as a GED testing center. An increasing percentage of the participants each year have received high school equivalency diplomas. These students have been referred to the few jobs throughout the county. In an overall achievement report of the Quitman County Center for Learning, Dr. George F. Aker pointed out the following:

> Fifty eight (58) individuals in the program achieved more than 1.1 grades, fifty six (56) achieved from 0.6-1.0, and seventy nine (79) achieved from 0.1-0.5 grade levels. In other words, of the two hundred sixty-six (266) persons who were retained in the program, one hundred ninety-three (193), approximately seventy-five (75) per cent of the students received positive benefits from the program in terms of grade level advancement alone.

Prior to the opening of the centers for the new program year a two-week teacher-training session was held. At present, the Instructional Staff is composed of five Supervisory Teachers and twenty Teachers. This creates an average teacher-student ratio of 1:10. At the onset of last year's program, a great deal of recruitment was not necessary, however, because we had decided that if at all possible we would try to increase our male enrollment, recruitment was necessary. Teachers aided the Counseling Department in the recruitment of students. Able Tests, Harcourt, Brace and World, were used in an overall evaluation.

Considering certain unexplainable occurrences in our independent evaluation conducted by Dr. George F. Aker of Florida State University, we decided to conduct an experiment within the experimental program in quest of explanations for these occurrences.

During our experiment some of our learning centers used only published adult education material whereas others used teacher-made material and student generated material. Some employed grouping arrangements and others did not.

The results of these experiments and demonstration have provided new insights for improving the programs of adult basic education throughout the rural South.

APPENDIX C

STAFF OF Q.C.C.L.E.D.

Staff of Q.C.C.L.E.D.

1. Bobby James, Director
2. Jacqueline Miller, Director Teacher Training and Curriculum Development
3. Bedeliah Cotton, Assistant Teacher Trainer
4. Kay Golliday, Finance Officer
5. Jewell Crenshaw, Payroll Clerk
6. Dorothy Crenshaw, Finance Secretary
7. Vivian Searcy, Secretary to Director and Office Manager
8. Bobbie Johnson, Coordinator of Counseling Services
9. Ezra Towner, Jr., Counselor
10. Lessie Taylor, Program Secretary
11. Beulah Hatley, Clerk-typist and Receptionist
12. A. B. Brown, Visual Aids Specialist and Inventory Control

Supervisory Teachers

1. Miss Dorothy Atkins
2. Miss Dorothy Thomas
3. Miss Lucille Morgan
4. Mrs. Bertha Burres
5. Mrs. Cleopatra Robinzine

Teachers

1. Mrs. Rose Jones
2. Mrs. Lucy Harris
3. Miss Verlinda Bradley
4. Mr. Thomas Smith
5. Mrs. Alma Haynes
6. Miss Ruthie Shaw
7. Miss Pearlean Hatley
8. Mrs. Cordelia Jossell
9. Mrs. Doris Baker
10. Mrs. Lizzie Thomas
11. Mrs. Olivia Jamison
12. Mr. Edgar Richmond
13. Mrs. Essie McAdory
14. Miss Rutha Thigpen
15. Miss Josephine Smith
16. Mr. Willie Spiva
17. Miss Essie Sims
18. Miss Mary Crawford
19. Mrs. Thelma Johnson
20. Mr. Frank Lester